

Motivating Students to Participate in Classroom Discussions through the Socratic Circle Approach

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ABSTRACT

According to the staff of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Zenica, second year students are not easily motivated to participate in classroom discussions. Most of the time, students are encouraged to participate, but only a selected few do. When asked why that is so, students reported that they feel uncomfortable, mostly because they feel that they have nothing important to share or that they are embarrassed to speak in front of their colleagues. The author of this paper took it upon herself to try to encourage students to open up and participate in classroom discussions. For the purpose of this research, the author has worked closely with second year students at the Department of English Language and Literature, introducing a new approach to ensure maximum student participation. The Socratic Circle approach was introduced and applied several times throughout the semester, and the students provided feedback each time they participated in the discussions. Two structures were used and the students were given the opportunity to express their opinions about each, as well as to comment about the Socratic Circle Rubric that was introduced for the purpose of grading their participation. This paper describes the steps that were taken over a four-month period and the author claims that by using the Socratic Circle approach it is possible to motivate every student to participate in classroom discussions on a regular basis, and that the students appreciate the use of the Socratic Circle Rubric because they know what is expected of them, as well as how their participation will be graded.